DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 304 226 PS 017 828

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TITLE Child Discipline and World Peace.
PUB DATE Nov 88
NOTE 17p.; Paper presented at the Annual Conference of the National Association for the Education of Young Children (Anaheim, CA, November 10-13, 1988).
PUB TYPE Viewpoints (120) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Childhood Needs; *Child Rearing; Day Care; Discipline; Early Childhood Education; History; *Parent Child Relationship; Parent Responsibility; *Peace; Preschool Education; *Social Change; *Teacher Responsibility; Teaching Methods
IDENTIFIERS Critical Analysis; *Montessori (Maria); Psychoanalytic Criticism

ABSTRACT

What can teachers of small children do to promote peace in the world? The answers go back to that "war between adults and children" first described by Maria Montessori; to the relationships between parents and offspring; and to the physical, psychological, and spiritual abuse of children that gets passed along through the generations. There is extensive knowledge of the historical development of child rearing, the characteristics of the dysfunctional family, and the roots of violence in the hidden cruelty in child rearing practices and ideologies. Analyses have produced the conclusions that the source of war is the dysfunctional family; that every persecutor was once a victim; and that repressed traumatic experiences of childhood are stored up in the body and influence adults. Given these circumstances, what can teachers and caregivers of small children do to promote peace in the world? They can: (1) develop awareness of "poisonous pedagogy" and stop passing it on; (2) organize classrooms to meet children's needs and minimize conflicts; and (3) model and facilitate procedures for problem-solving that respect the integrity of children. Appended are role-playing scenarios for teacher problem-solving, and lists of references, recommended readings, and peace organizations. (RH)

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CHILD DISCIPLINE AND WORLD PEACE

Joy Turner[1]

What is generally meant by peace is the ceasing of war. But this concept, a purely negative one, is not the real concept of peace. True peace, on the contrary, suggests the triumph of justice and love...it reveals the existence of a better world wherein harmony reigns.

The life of the nations when they are not at war is an adaptation to events that have gone before, an adaptation taking place between the victors and the vanquished, all of them fallen beings who have broken away from the harmony of the universe.

The wars of today are not born of hatred for the enemy. There is an unwritten chapter of human psychology, there exists an untamed force of infinite danger to all. If we wish to set about a sane psychical rebuilding of ourselves, we must go back to the child, to the conflict between adult and child--age-long warfare more acute than ever today because of our complex and depressing civilization, an environment ever further removed from the state of nature and hence less and less adapted to the child.

The erroneous belief has persisted that it is the duty of the adult to fashion the child according to the pattern required by society. This misunderstanding, handed down from time immemorial, caused the first war--between parents and children, between teachers and pupils.

When the independent life of the child is not recognized with its own characteristics and its own ends, when the adults interpret these characteristics and ends (which are different from theirs) as being errors in the child which they must make speed to correct, there arises between the strong and the weak a struggle which is fatal to humankind.

The adult triumphs over the child so that when the child has grown there is graven forever, inside, the marks of that famous peace which follows war: on one hand a destruction, on the other a painful adaptation. The child performs the cruel task, first of hiding the real self, then of forgetting it, of burying in the subconsciousness a wealth of expanding life whose aspirations were frustrated. Then, bearing this hidden burden, the child-become-adult encounters the errors current in the world.

The unsatisfied needs of the child leave their mark on the adult. The child who has never learned to act alone, to direct her own actions, to govern his own will, grows into an adult who is easily led and must always lean upon others. People who are brought up in this way have been prepared neither to fight and be victorious, nor to conquer truth and possess it, nor to love others and join with them in striving for a better life. Their education has prepared them rather for an incident, a mere episode of real community life: something we call war.

For in reality the cause of war does not lie in armaments, but in those who make use of them.

If the human race had grown up with a healthy soul enjoying the full development of a strong character and of a clear intellect, we could not have borne within ourselves contradictory moral principles, two kinds of justice, both love and hatred, nor two disciplines--the one gathering together human energies for constructive purposes and the other gathering those same energies for the destruction of what has been constructed. In other words, a strong person could not bear to have a double conscience, still less bear to act in two opposite directions.

It is upon the perfect and tranquil spiritual life of the child

[1]Workshop presentation, NAEYC Annual Conference, Anaheim, CA, November 1988.

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> that depends the health or sickness of the soul, the strength or weakness of the character, the clearness or obscurity of the intellect.
>
> War today can have no other meaning than to be an eternal chastisement attached to the moral errors that darken the human mind. It seems so self-evident--almost a *childish* statement--to assert that only two things are needed in order to establish peace in the world: above all a new type of person, a better humanity; then an environment that should no longer set a limit to the infinite desire of humankind.(1)

The words you have just read come from a little tract called "Peace and Education," the transcription of a lecture given by Maria Montessori in 1943. The expression of her ideas about peace led to Montessori's nomination for the Nobel Peace Prize three times--in 1949, -50, and -51.

That was a long time ago; and yet today Montessori's words seem more timely than ever. By now, several generations of us have grown up in the shadow of the mushroom-shaped cloud that was Hiroshima in August of 1945; but our efforts toward peace have continued to be *external*, such as the stockpiling of weapons--as if the greater their number, the greater our strength and security. We are still operating on a principle of external deterrence, as summed up in the so-called wisdom left to us by the ancient Romans, who said: "If you want peace, prepare for war."

In their booklet *What About the Children?* (2) the peace group Parents and Teachers for Social Responsibility say, "The arms race is like two people standing in a room full of gasoline up to their knees. Both are collecting matches and thinking that the more matches they collect, the more secure they will be."

The same pamphlet also discusses the way twisted words and distorted images contribute to the problem--for example: when a bomb is sent through the mail or hostages are held for ransom, the term "terrorism" is used; yet when governments threaten to kill millions of people with nuclear weapons, that is called "strategy." One government publication written for children describes nuclear war as if it were just another social inconvenience. It tells us that after a war, "Everyone will work together to help the community get back to normal."

But the truth is, there won't *be* any community, let alone any "normal." If we're really honest, we carry the same message in our hearts as the signs posted at all of Boston's civil defense shelters. Those signs say:

NO SHELTER - NO ESCAPE, WARNING
The Board of Health of Boston has determined that no occupants of this building will survive a nuclear attack. NUCLEAR WAR has no cure. It can only be prevented.

It can only be prevented. But what ***can*** prevent it? What can we do? At an individual level, the magnitude of the problem is overwhelm-

ing. *What About the Children* offers a list of suggestions:

1. Make a commitment to do *something*; even small steps add up when many people are making them--like 10 minutes a week to work on a project.
2. Join an organization or two.
3. Create links; share information with others.
4. Work in the mainstream; "carry the flag" for this cause.
5. Organize a street lobby.
6. Use all the media: write letters, make posters, conduct interviews, set up panel discussions, use your public access broadcasting channels.
7. Ask tough questions: challenge "experts," question authority.
8. Pressure your public servants.
9. Sponsor a resolution or a conference.
10. Distribute "What About the Children?" booklets.
11. Engage in citizen diplomacy, and encourage the international exchange of ideas and people; "as more people lead, more leaders will follow." (2)

Like the stockpiling of weapons, however, this list--except for the first item--is about *externals*. I think the real solutions lie elsewhere. I think the real solutions have to do with *internal* life. The problems go back to that "war between adults and children" first described by Maria Montessori more than fifty years ago, to the relationships between parents and offspring, to the "sins of the fathers," which amount to the physical, psychological, and spiritual abuse of children that gets passed along through the generations.

In her 1936 book *The Secret of Childhood* (3), Montessori spoke of childhood as a social problem, and described the position of the child as "like that of one who has been robbed of his home and civil rights. He is a being relegated to the margins of society, to be condemned, insulted, and punished by any adult as if this were the latter's natural right." The very children we see every day in our jobs as professional caregivers, no matter how fortunate they may be otherwise, have been "entrusted to the care of strangers." Adults are busy with their own work, their own lives. Their children are just one of their many concerns--maybe not even the one with greatest priority. How often do your parents ask--and really want to know--how their child is doing? How many fail to show up on parent conference day? How many of those who do come have a good idea of what the real needs of their child are? How many still believe that spanking their children is perfectly OK?

We have many, many laws, so many that it's impossible to know them all; yet there are still virtually no laws that guarantee any rights to children. If we see children in the media, it is usually because they have been physically abused in some way. How often are we--the professional parental substitutes--the accused in the latest witch hunt? How often do we hear about the physically abused child who is returned to the abusing parent when things quiet down? How many *emotionally* abused children do we never know or hear about?

In 1936 Montessori wrote:

> We have come to see that children are human beings whose lives have been warped by those who have given them their life and sustenance

> and by the society of adults about them...Children become the victims of the parents' tyrannical instincts...The task that confronts us is not the further organization of social movements already begun or the coordination of various private and public enterprises on behalf of children, for in so doing we would simply be acting as adults banded together to assist something outside ourselves, children, without really coming to the heart of the problem. Instead, the social question of childhood penetrates deeply into our inner lives, rousing our consciences and stirring us to act. A child is not a stranger, one simply to be observed from outside. Rather, childhood constitutes the most important element in an adult's life, for it is in the early years that a person is made. The well-being of the adult is intimately connected with the kind of life that one had when one was a child. Our mistakes fall upon our children and make an indelible impression upon them. We shall die, but our children will suffer the consequences of our errors. Whatever affects a child affects humanity, for it is in the delicate and secret recesses of the soul that one's education is accomplished. The startling blindness of adults, their insensibility with regard to their own offspring, is something that is deeply rooted and of long duration. An adult who loves children but unconsciously condemns them inflicts upon them a secret sorrow which is a mirror of his own mistakes.(3)

Many years went by before anyone seemed to take these same ideas so seriously. But in 1973 Morton Schatzman published a book called *Soul Murder: Persecution in the Family* (4), which gave us a name for what has been happening to children through the ages. In 1974, a group of papers by ten distinguished researchers was published as *The History of Childhood* (5). The book proposed that the central force for change in history is neither technology nor economics, but the "psychogenic" changes in personality occurring because of successive generations of parent-child interactions. "That child-rearing practices are the basis for adult personality was proven again and again," wrote the editor, Lloyd deMause. "Where they originated stumped every psychoanalyst who raised the question." The book begins with the following paragraph:

> The history of childhood is a nightmare from which we have only recently begun to awaken. The further back in history one goes, the lower the level of child care, and the more likely children are to be killed, abandoned, beaten, terrorized, and sexually abused.

The material studied by these writers included two thousand years of literature from the disciplines of history and government, anthropology, and archeology, as well as more personal, individual sources from other cultures and the past, such as letters, diaries, essays, and autobiographies. "In studying childhood over many generations," deMause wrote, "it is most important to concentrate on those moments which most affect the psyche of the next generation: primarily, this means *what happens when an adult is face to face with a child who needs something*. The adult has, I believe, three major reactions available: [1] He can use the child as a vehicle for projection of the contents of his own unconscious; [2] he can use the child as a substitute for an adult figure important in his own childhood; or [3] he can empathize with the child's needs and act to satisfy them."

The results of this most unusual study portray the development of human child-rearing through historical periods, each named accord-

ing to the mode of parent-child interaction that seemed widespread. DeMause explains that the stages also represent a taxology for the present; that is, all of them can still be found somewhere.

The period of antiquity was characterized by the Medea myth and termed the "Infanticidal Mode"; when parents routinely resolved their anxieties about raising children by killing them, the effect on the surviving children was profound. The child of this time was defined as an object, often a nuisance. As a means of containing "dangerous projections" of the parent, the child was as a rule kept tightly swaddled.

Although the child of the early and middle ages was accepted as having a soul, the mode of this period was called "Abandonment," because the child was so often sent away to be raised--to a wet-nurse, monastery or nunnery, foster family, or the home of a noble where he or she was used as a servant or hostage. Children left at home were likely to suffer severe emotional abandonment.

With the Renaissance came the "Ambivalent Mode," in which children were seen as capable of being both bad and loving at the same time. The child of this period was treated as wax, plaster, or clay to be molded (or, more likely, beaten) into shape.

The "Intrusive Mode" of the 18th century was characterized by parental attempts to conquer the child's *mind* in order to control its physical and psychological activities. During this time of great transition for parent-child relations, pediatrics was born and physical care improved; infant mortality was reduced; swaddling disappeared.

For the next two centuries, the raising of a child became less a process of conquering its will than of training it, guiding it into proper paths, and teaching it to conform--thus the mode is called "Socializing." deMause says it is still thought of by most people as the only model within which discussion of child care can proceed, and it has been the source of all 20th-century psychological models, from Freud's "channeling of impulses" to Skinner's behaviorism.

Emerging around 1950, the "Helping Mode" described by deMause "involves the proposition that the child knows better than the parent what it needs at each stage of its life." Parents work to empathize with the child and fulfill its expanding and particular needs, which requires an enormous amount of time, energy, and discussion, especially in the child's first six years. "Helping a young child reach its daily goals means continually responding to it, playing with it, tolerating its regressions, being its servant rather than the other way around, interpreting its emotional conflicts, and providing the objects specific to its evolving interests." Few parents, he says, have yet consistently attempted this kind of child care.

Child-rearing practices were attacked by European writers in two other books of the 1970's: Braunmuhl's *Antipedagogy* (7) and Rutschky's *Black Pedagogy* (8).

But also in the '70's a new problem began more and more to occupy our attention: we became aware that addiction to mood-altering substances was affecting the lives of people on a scale never before seen in human history. And the use of drugs and alcohol was beginning at younger and younger ages; even elementary schools were alarmed. Some launched drug prevention campaigns--but found when they studied the results after a few years that the programs had failed; what the students had learned at an intellectual level was not enough to protect those who were at risk socially and emotionally, especially during the peer pressure-cooker years of junior and senior high school.

Even the professional psychological community found its "weapons" inadequate. It was very quickly discovered that the success rate for cures was very low, and the rate for those who stayed off drugs after a successful initial treatment was even lower. It seemed that nothing in life could compete with the addictive "high."

The search for treatments that work has been desperate and exhaustive. To date the most effective methods are based on the "Twelve Steps" developed by Alcoholics Anonymous and the idea that recovery is a *process* requiring participation in a social group. We now have "Anonymous" recovery groups for almost every addiction one can name, including gambling, narcotics, overeating, and even relationships.

The interesting thing that is coming out of these groups--and the thing that makes it relevant to the topic of peace--is that the source of addictive behavior appears to be the same as the true source of war, and that source is the dysfunctional family. Thanks to a group of therapists-turned-writers--Alice Miller, Sharon Wegscheider-Cruse, Anne Wilson Schaef, John Bradshaw, Patrick Karnes, and Charles Whitfield, to name a few--some new concepts have emerged which are important for both the treatment of addictions and the search for peace:

1. A family is a dynamic social system, having structural laws, components, and rules.
2. A dysfunctional family has rules that are abusive and shaming; they destroy children's inner identity. According to Bradshaw, parents shame children primarily through abandonment by: actually physically leaving them; not modeling their own emotions; not being there to affirm their children's expressions of emotion; not providing for developmental dependency needs; abusing the children (physically, sexually, emotionally and spiritually); using them to take care of their own unmet dependency needs; using them to take care of their marriages; hiding and denying their shame secrets to the outside world (so that children have to protect them to keep the family balance); not giving them their time, attention and direction; and by acting shameless (6).
3. When a child senses that the true self is not acceptable, a false self develops--and the true self stops experiencing and developing. With the true self unavailable, feelings are dissociated; normal self-protection and emotional independence are not possible under this circumstance. Such a person grows up to be an "adult child," a people-pleaser whose life is compulsively dominated by the unmet needs frozen below consciousness. The way we were treated as small children is

the way we treat ourselves the rest of our life.

4. Drug addicts attempt to adapt to society by destroying their own authentic feelings (a recreation of their childhood trauma). Addictive substances or processes give temporary access to feelings and an impression of the true self, in contrast to the vapidity and emptiness of the person's usual emotional life. But because the effect comes from outside (the "stuff"), the addict avoids becoming responsible for and integrating the feelings; s/he remains dependent on the compulsion, an expression of lifelong dependency on others for a sense of who one is.
5. Every persecutor was once a victim.

In her book *For Your Own Good: Hidden Cruelty in Child-Rearing and the Roots of Violence*, Alice Miller states the case this way:

1. All children are born to grow, to develop, to live, to love, and to articulate their needs and feelings for their self-protection.
2. For their development, children need the respect and protection of adults who take them seriously, love them, and honestly help them to become oriented in the world.
3. When these vital needs are frustrated and children are, instead, abused for the sake of adults' needs by being exploited, beaten, punished, taken advantage of, manipulated, neglected, or deceived without the intervention of any witness, then their integrity will be lastingly impaired.
4. The normal reactions to such injury should be anger and pain. Since children in this hurtful kind of environment are forbidden to express their anger, however, and since it would be unbearable to experience their pain all alone, they are compelled to suppress their feelings, repress all memory of the trauma, and idealize those guilty of the abuse. Later they will have no memory of what was done to them.
5. Disassociated from the original cause, their feelings of anger, helplessness, despair, longing, anxiety, and pain will find expression in destructive acts against others (criminal behavior, mass murder) or against themselves (drug addiction, alcoholism, prostitution, psychic disorders, suicide).
6. If these people become parents, they will then often direct acts of revenge for their mistreatment in childhood against their own children, whom they use as scapegoats. Child abuse is still sanctioned--indeed, held in high regard--in our society as long as it is defined as *child-rearing*. It is a tragic fact that parents beat their children in order to escape the emotions stemming from how they were treated by their own parents.
7. If mistreated children are not to become criminals or mentally ill, it is essential that at least once in their life they come in contact with a person who knows without any doubt that the environment, not the helpless, battered child, is at fault. In this regard, knowledge or ignorance on the part of society can be instrumental in either saving or destroying a life. Here lies the great opportunity for relatives, social workers, therapists, teachers, doctors, psychiatrists, officials, and nurses to support the child and to believe her or him.
8. Till now, society has protected the adult and blamed the victim. It has been abetted in its blindness by theories, still in keeping with the pedagogical principles of our great-grandparents, according to which children are viewed as crafty creatures, dominated by wicked drives, who invent stories and attack their innocent parents or

desire them sexually. In reality, children tend to blame themselves for their parents' cruelty and to absolve the parents, whom they invariably love, of all responsibility.

9. For some years now, it has ben possible to prove, through new therapeutic methods, that repressed traumatic experiences of childhood are stored up in the body and, though unconscious, exert an influence even in adulthood. In addition, electronic testing of the fetus has revealed a fact previously unknown to most adults--that *a child responds to and learns both tenderness and cruelty from the very beginning.*
10. In the light of this new knowledge, even the most absurd behavior reveals its formerly hidden logic once the traumatic experiences of childhood need no longer remain shrouded in darkness.
11. Our sensitization to the cruelty with which children are treated, until now commonly denied, and to the consequences of such treatment will as a matter of course bring to an end the perpetuation of violence from generation to generation.
12. People whose integrity has not been damaged in childhood, who were protected, respected, and treated with honesty by their parents, will be--both in their youth and in adulthood--intelligent, responsive, empathic, and highly sensitive. They will take pleasure in life and will not feel any need to kill or even hurt others or themselves. They will use their power to defend themselves, not to attack others. They will not be able to do otherwise than respect and protect those weaker than themselves, including their children, because this is what they have learned from their own experience, and because it is this knowledge (and not the experience of cruelty) that has been stored up inside them from the beginning. It will be inconceivable to such people that earlier generations had to build up a gigantic war industry in order to feel comfortable and safe in this world. Since it will not be their unconscious drive in life to ward off intimidation experienced at a very early age, they will be able to deal with attempts at intimidation in their adult life more rationally and more creatively. (9)

But let's go back to our original question: As teachers of small children, what can we do to promote peace in the world?

I think the answers do *not* lie in developing a curriculum for the children, but in *how we live with them.* The things we can do are:

- Develop our own awareness of "poisonous pedagogy"--and stop passing it on;
- Organize our classrooms to meet children's needs more effectively--and minimize conflicts;
- Model and facilitate procedures for problem-solving that respect the integrity of the children.

The first of these three, **awareness**, may not be an easy road to take. Success here will bring up for us the issues of what happened to *us*, as children--and our clues to this are the issues that come up as we interact with children and others. Isolation is a problem, in our line of work. Once our teacher training period is over, we may end up as the only adult with a group of children and rarely spend much time with other adults talking about things that are significant for us; we may never again experience any real feedback from another adult about our interactions with children. I think that can be very unhealthy, for both children and teachers. John Bradshaw tells us we cannot walk this road to awareness alone; to

heal ourselves and revive our full measure of self-esteem, we need support. We need to experience acceptance and mirroring for our true self in order to break the spell of our family of origin.

Farther down the road to awareness we may choose to join a support group or create one of our own, but a way to get started is to read a few books about it.

The second thing we can do, **classroom organization** to meet children's needs effectively, is a big topic by itself. Abraham Maslow (10) saw human needs as a hierarchy of basic motivations proceeding from the physiological level to safety, love and belongingness, self-esteem, and, at the highest level, self-actualization. His theory proposes that the fulfillment of lower (more basic) needs propels the organism on to the next highest level. Ultimately, the realization of one's potentials, capacities, and talents will depend on achieving satisfaction of the other, more basic needs. My own view of how these needs can be implemented in a preprimary educational setting translates them into a developmental framework.

o *Physiological needs* refer to basic drives, such as hunger, thirst, air to breathe, sleep, waste elimination, and so forth. But a young child whose primary physiological needs are met, at home or as part of the caregiving setting, still has a *need to move*. Movement may be the most important level of mastery for the preprimary age period; as a child organizes his/her movements, so shall s/he organize everything else. For children to benefit fully, the movement must also be *purposeful*, that is, connected with the mental activity going on, for it is "through movement that we come in contact with external reality...A child has a natural desire to master the voluntary use of his organs of movement. If he fails to do so, he cannot externalize the fruit of his intelligence." (11)

An appropriate preprimary environment can implement the need for movement by providing four things:

- Stimulation in the form of a wide variety of constructive, age-appropriate activities that offer the opportunity for exercise of both small and large-muscle coordination;
- The freedom to move and do for most of the day, keeping restrictive activities (such as teacher-directed groups) at a minimum;
- The opportunity to achieve precision in movement: "The child not only needs something interesting to do but also likes to be shown exactly how to do it. Precision is found to attract him deeply, and this it is that keeps him at work (11)."
- The opportunity for regular repetition of self-chosen activities; Piaget observed that repetition is a sign of an emergent ability, and Montessori, that it leads to self-correction.

o Maslow's *Safety* translates into the child's *need for order*. In a group setting, safety has two faces: the warmth, respect, and affirmation demonstrated by the caregiving adults; and the order, structure, and dependability of the environment. The first offers protection from internal factors (such as fears of abandonment or of other strong feelings that may threaten to overwhelm the child, especially in the absence of a parent), and the second from external factors (other children, physical hazards, or problems resulting from some form of misoperating the environment).

Providing warmth, respect, and affirmation to small children involves, just as Alice Miller said, taking them seriously, accepting and mirroring their feelings, helping them to figure out positive alternatives in solving their problems, and honestly helping them to become oriented in the world. It does *not* involve requiring them to hide or deny pain--such as "cheering them up" when they're sad or "distracting them" when their purposes conflict with ours.

Providing order, structure, and dependability in the environment involves:

- organizing materials so that goals and procedures for use are clear;
- arranging the room so that: physical boundaries are secure, there is a dependable place for everything, the traffic/activity flow works to protect children's ability to concentrate, there is a variety of spaces to be and work in, and encouragement to be responsible for maintaining the order and cleanliness;
- maintaining a time schedule that is dependable but flexible;
- communicating clear behavioral guidelines (psychological boundaries).

o *Love and belongingness* equate to *social connection* for the small child. By modeling acceptance of individual differences and advocating prosocial behavior, the teacher helps children begin to learn how to be part of a group. This process can go on for some time (how many adults do you know who have never learned?). Helping children to establish positive social relations can be facilitated by:

- Vertical grouping, so that children have opportunity for contact with both same and different ages and stages (varied levels of maturity);
- Establishing communal "ownership" and responsibility for the classroom and equipment;
- Providing freedom of movement and interaction for a large part of the day; and
- Providing places to invite and accommodate different types of interaction: a space for the whole group to sit together, partnership seating arrangements (small sofa, bench, "twosome" chairs) and small-group equipment (blocks, doll corner, sandbox), time with teacher (rocking chair?), and time alone (individual spaces).

o *Self-esteem* in the small child grows out of the experience of *success*. Every group setting has two kinds of environments: the physical and the psychological. The teacher functions as the boundary for the psychological environment, just as the floor, walls, and ceiling are boundaries for the physical environment.

- Physical environment supports successful experience by providing each child a place to keep his or her own things, including work products; by what Montessori called "control of error" in the equipment, so that the chances of successful use are supported by the structure of materials and procedures; and by the opportunity to be confronted with natural and logical consequences in the process of using the environment.
- Psychological environment supports success through an atmosphere of warmth and respect for each individual, acknowledgment of feelings and accomplishments, assistance in handling consequences of actions, the opportunity for making choices of activity, clear

communication of expectations and guidelines for behavior and interaction, and flexibility in schedules.

o *Self-actualization* for young children probably equates to the growth of *independence and autonomy*, for in the long run the ultimate goal of growing up is to be able to take care of oneself and one's environment. The significant opportunities that support independence and autonomy include:
- Making choices;
- Access to the culture through knowledge and practical skills (through the equipment and information we choose to provide);
- Active,"hands on" learning activities; and
- Manageable, child-size equipment and furnishings.

When we have provided for all of these things, we've gone a long way toward eliminating conflicts that arise between the environment and children's needs. Yet conflicts will still happen; problems will occur and have to be resolved.

The Rules

"The rules" for a group of small children set boundaries for the psychological environment. In my experience, the way those rules are developed and implemented can support the children's liberty--or it can get in the way. Here are some mistakes I think we tend to make:

- o We mix up rules with procedures--and call all of them rules.
- o We have too many rules.
- o We make the rules too complicated.
- o We make them up on the spot for specifics (to suit our convenience).
- o We don't have good reasons for them.
- o We state the same idea in many different ways--instead of the same way every time.
- o We start with the word "Don't."
- o We make things personal rather than situational (as in "I want you to hang up your coat now," instead of "Please hang up your coat so it won't get stepped on").
- o In trying to be "nice," we imply a choice when there isn't a choice (I call this the "Would you like to..." syndrome).
- o We use dishonest language (the "royal 'We'" or the "You need to..." syndrome).

A good set of rules is reasonable, simple, positive, and always applicable. By that I mean that if a thing is a rule, there are never any exceptions; anything else is a procedure. For example, something like "Walk when you move through the room" is probably not a rule, because there may be times when that's not a requirement, such as when we are doing a rhythm and movement activity together and the teacher gives the direction to run and hop. So "Walk when you move through the room" is really a *procedure*, because it is subject to teacher judgment and decision.

I find that three rules are usually enough:

- o Take care of the people (including yourself).
- o Take care of the things (environment).
- o Make it work (this means: follow procedures so we can all be safe and successful).

Now; with such simple guidelines, what can go wrong? Why do children break the rules? And why do adults so often get upset when they do?

In her great little book *Talks With Teachers* (12), Lillian Katz says there are three sources for children's misbehavior, each calling for a different sort of response from the adult: lack of knowledge calls for giving information (telling or showing how); need for attention or reinforcement may call for retraining (for example, withholding reinforcement for a temper tantrum by taking away the audience); and emotional upset, which calls for acknowledging and mirroring the child's feelings.

Rudolf Dreikers (13) talks about the child's own behavioral objectives as "mistaken goals," which he identifies as the child's attempts to meet real needs by accepting goals that have been erroneously modeled or reinforced: attention, power, revenge, and inadequacy. The idea here is that children behave in ways that bring responses that reinforce their positions about themselves, which is somewhat the same as saying that they re-enact their family drama. The adult's first feeling reaction is probably an accurate clue to the child's position; for example, if we feel annoyed, tempted to remind or coax, or delighted at the child's "goodness," the child is probably acting out of a need for attention; if we feel angry, provoked, or challenged, the child may be acting out of his need to exercise power.

The doctors Paul Wood (14) and Barry Brazelton maintain that, although most children have a natural inclination to be cooperative, some are just born different--and difficult. Parents may need to learn some special techniques for helping these children learn to interact and manage their lives successfully.

I think children break the rules because they aren't feeling safe; they are saying, "Tell me who I am again, so I can feel secure." And I think adults--especially parents and teachers--get upset when children behave badly because we interpret this to mean that *we* are doing a bad job of being parents or teachers.

Discipline can be a difficult area, because no one can really teach us how to do it. It's not possible to predict all the things that could happen that we'll have to deal with. What we do has to come out of some very personal decisions about what our philosophy is and what our goals are. If we have made these decisions, they will help us decide what to do in each of the infinite number of situations that may come up.

Positive Discipline/Support

The dictionary defines *discipline* as "to train by instruction and exercise," while *punish* is defined as "to subject to pain, loss, confinement, death, etc. as a penalty for some offense, transgression, or fault." Perhaps the primary difference between the two is the intent of the giver:

- o Discipline aims to develop understanding and capability, while punishment seeks payment of a price.
- o Discipline creates opportunity for enhancement of self-esteem, while punishment takes something away.

o Discipline creates success a child can build on; punishment can generate feelings of resentment, fear, and hostility.

Five assumptions have been helpful to me in relation to children and discipline/support.

1. All behavior is motivated, that is, has a purpose. It is either an expression of the child's needs or of the child's perception of what the parent/teacher expects.
2. The child's strongest emotional need is to feel safe.
3. "Feeling safe" depends on two things:
   - o The adult's acceptance, affirmation, and consistent behavior (warmth, respect, affection, help in getting needs met,); and
   - o The adult's protection--from both internal and external events. Internal events include the child's need to understand herself and others, to cope with strong feelings, and to manage her behavior. External events include keeping oneself physically safe, learning how to perform competently, and understanding how the world works.
4. Children can learn new ways of coping (and so can adults).
5. To be an effective leader, the teacher must do these things:
   - o Learn how to form a helping partnership with the child; for example, encourage a child who is having difficulties to notice when s/he is feeling destructive and seek you out instead of acting out the destructiveness.
   - o Communicate expectations clearly; for example, start all group meetings with a ritual statement of what you expect ("Story time works when you keep your body in your own space, your lips quiet, and your ears listening"), and invite anyone who doesn't wish to be part of that group to go to a designated place ("to think your own thoughts"). By presenting this choice at the beginning, you encourage self-awareness and responsibility; the result is a behavior contract with the children.
   - o Allow the child to be responsible for his/her behavior; for example, after intervening to stop the physical struggle or violence in a conflict between two children, ask "What is happening here?" and invite each to present his view; then give them the time and structure for finding a solution both can accept--rather than simply saying how things will be.
   - o Examine your willingness to do what is necessary to ensure the child's success (this includes willingness to reject punishment, to analyze the problem and identify what is required for the child to succeed, then decide whether you are willing and able to ensure this success);
   - o Structure all "disciplinary actions" for positive outcomes (so they *add* to self-esteem, rather than diminish it).

The idea of *reparation* is essential to successful outcomes: a child who has monopolized the teacher by disrupting the group has taken something away from the class, and thus has a responsibility to give something back. Although most children are able to come up with some service they can perform, one who can't think of anything within a 10 or 15-minute "time out" period can be given a list of acceptable tasks to choose from.

If we operate on the theory that a child misbehaves to begin with because s/he is feeling bad about her/himself, then the only chance for discipline to "work" depends on the child coming out of it feeling better than s/he did at the start. Reparation is a key element because it provides a way for this to happen. Mending the book he tore or preparing the day's snack for the class after disrupting their group time--and then being acknowledged by the teacher for a job well done--can provide the child with the success and self-satisfaction needed to build a better day.

As adults, when we make the decision to reject a behavior that we had internalized through modeling at an earlier stage of life (from our parents or teachers), we are left with the problem of what to do instead. For teachers, I think it can be very helpful to *practice* what we are going to do. With my student teachers, it has been very effective to role-play some fairly common situations. They always feel a little silly about play-acting, before we start --as most people do; but the day we spend doing this always has great significance for them forever after. Role-play is an effective learning tool for several reasons: it involves both sides of the brain, because it's a holistic activity; it is an opportunity to find out how difficult it can be to make changes in what we internalized so early in life; and it gives people a chance, when they take one of the *other* roles (not the teacher), to get a sense of the other person's perspective (the child or parent's). All of those things are important.

The "Role-Play Scenarios for Teacher Problem-Solving" that I use with my students can also provide both fun and value as the content of several staff meetings at a school. To role-play a scenario and then talk about it, and perhaps role-play it again to try out some different ideas can serve as a good vehicle for teachers to share their experience with each other. If everybody in a school makes the commitment to deal with problem-solving so that the integrity of the children is always preserved, the quest for peace is sure to move in a positive direction--within ourselves, our classrooms, and our universe.

ROLE-PLAY SCENARIOS FOR TEACHER PROBLEM-SOLVING

ISSUE: SEPARATION
CAST: Teacher, New child, Mother
SETTING: Playground, just before school
SITUATION: Child and mother arrive, both looking unhappy. They stand and watch...finally, mother brings child to you, says child doesn't want to come to school today and she doesn't know what to do...

ISSUE: PUTTING WORK AWAY WHEN FINISHED
CAST: Teacher, Boy about 4
SETTING: Classroom during work time
SITUATION: You notice child has left out the work he was using. You remind him to put it away. He says, "No, I don't want to. You do it."

ISSUE: CHILD DISTURBS OTHERS' WORK
CAST: Teacher, Girl (age 3), Boy (age 3)
SETTING: Classroom during work time
SITUATION: Girl is working with a puzzle. Boy takes a piece and throws it on the floor, then takes another piece and runs away. Girl screams...

ISSUE: CHILDREN FIGHTING
CAST: Teacher, Two boys about 4
SETTING: Classroom during work time
SITUATION: Two boys are holding a material and struggling over it. Finally one draws back to punch the other...

ISSUE: DISTURBANCE AT GROUP TIME
CAST: Teacher, Children, Disruptive boy (age 5)
SETTING: Classroom, children in circle at group sharing time
SITUATION: You begin the group sharing time. During the group, a boy is disturbing those sitting next to him...

ISSUE: DAMAGED MATERIAL
CAST: Teacher, Boy (age 3), Girl (age 5)
SETTING: Classroom during work time
SITUATION: The two children have been in the book corner together. The girl brings a book to you and shows you a torn page. She says the boy did it...

ISSUE: PARENT COMPLAINT ABOUT OTHER CHILDREN
CAST: Teacher, Mother, Girl (about 4)
SETTING: Classroom, before school
SITUATION: You are setting up the room for class and Mother appears at the door. She tells you that her child doesn't want to come to school because the big boys pick on her and hurt her [she seems angry]...

ISSUE: CHILD WHO TATTLES
CAST: Teacher, Girl (age 3+), Boy (4)
SETTING: Playground
SITUATION: Girl comes up to you crying, says "He kicked me" (points to Boy, who is across playground, but watching)...

ISSUE: CHILD WHO WON'T PLAY
CAST: Teacher, Three girls (about 4)
SETTING: Playground
SITUATION: One girl has stayed near you since arriving. Finally you say, "Why don't you go and play now, before it's time to go inside?" She looks unhappy and says, "Nobody will play with me." [Other two girls are playing nearby.]

ISSUE: WET PANTS
CAST: Head Teacher, Teacher (you), Boy (age $3\frac{1}{2}$)
SETTING: Classroom, at end of rest time
SITUATION: Boy has wet his pants during rest time. Head Teacher tells you to handle it, then starts to go outside with class...

ISSUE: CHILD WHO WON'T CHOOSE SOMETHING TO DO
CAST: Head Teacher, Teacher (you), Girl (age 3)
SETTING: Classroom during work time
SITUATION: Head Teacher notices girl wandering and not choosing work, asks you to help her find something...

ISSUE: CLASS WON'T STOP AND LISTEN
CAST: Head Teacher, Teacher (you), Children
SETTING: Classroom near end of work time
SITUATION: Head Teacher asks you to ring the bell and announce that it is time for a story. You do--but the children don't stop and listen...

ISSUE: NAME-CALLING
CAST: Teacher, Two boys (between 3 and 5)
SETTING: Classroom, during lunch time
SITUATION: You overhear one boy saying to the children sitting near him: "I don't like Jim, 'cause he's a nigger."

ISSUE: "BAD WORDS"
CAST: Teacher, Girl (age 5), Boy (age 4)
SETTING: Classroom during work time
SITUATION: Girl comes to you and says, "Teacher, David just said a bad word to me"...

ISSUE: CONFRONTING AN ANGRY CO-TEACHER
CAST: You, Co-teacher, Child ("John")
SETTING: Classroom during work time
SITUATION: Your school administrator has asked the staff to agree to confront each other (or be confronted) if they see inappropriate interactions between another staff member and a child. During class you hear your co-teacher's voice, sounding angry. She is chewing out John, who has just splattered paint from the easel all over the window.

ISSUE: CONFRONTING YOUR ASSISTANT
CAST: Teacher and Assistant
SETTING: Classroom, after school
SITUATION: Your assistant, who is supposed to prepare the room each day before school, keeps forgetting to do some things...

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RECOMMENDED READING

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PEACE ORGANIZATIONS

AMERICAN COMMITTEE ON EAST-WEST ACCORD	109 11th Street, EE	Washington, DC 20003
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BEYOND WAR	222 High Street	Palo Alto, CA 94301
CENTER FOR INNOVATIVE DIPLOMACY	644 Emerson, Suite 32	Palo Alto, CA 94301
EDUCATORS FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY	23 Garden Street	Cambridge, MA 02138
GROUND ZERO	P.O. Box 19049	Portland, OR 97219
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